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U.S. has used psychic spies for Libya, North Korea

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — For 20 years, the United States has secretly used psychics in attempts to hunt down Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi, find plutonium in North Korea and help drug enforcement agencies, the CIA and others confirmed Tuesday.

The ESP spying operations — codenamed "Stargate" — were unreliable, but three psychics continued to work out of Fort Meade, Md., at least into July, said researchers who evaluated the program for the CIA.

The program has cost the government $20 million, said Ray Hyman, a psychology professor at the University of Oregon in Eugene, who helped prepare the study.

He said the psychics were used by various agencies for remote viewing — using extrasensory perception to provide information from distant sites.

Up to six psychics at any time worked at assignments that included trying to hunt down Gadhafi before the 1986 U.S. bombing of Libya, find plutonium in North Korea in 1994, and locate kidnapped Brig. Gen. James L. Dozier in Italy.

Gadhafi was not injured in the bombing. Dozier, kidnapped by the Red Brigades in Italy in 1981, was freed by Italian police after 42 days. News reports at the time said the police were assisted by an undisclosed number of U.S. State and Defense Department specialists using sophisticated electronic surveillance equipment.

But Dale Graff, a former director of the Defense Intelligence Agency's ESP program, told ABC'S "Nightline" that psychics provided the name of the city and the building where Dozier was held.

The study reported mixed success with the psychics. Hyman was skeptical, while his co-author, said Jessica Utts, a professor of statistics at the University of California-Davis, said some of the results were promising.

"My conclusion was that there's no evidence these people have done anything helpful for the government," Hyman said.

Utts, however, said the government psychics were accurate about 15 percent of the time. In some tests, when given a series of four choices, they picked the right answer a third of the time.

"I think they would be effective if they were used in conjunction with other intelligence," she said.

CIA spokesman Mark Mansfield confirmed the existence of Stargate and the study.

"The CIA is reviewing available programs regarding parapsychological phenomena, mostly remote viewing, to determine their usefulness to the intelligence community," he said.

But he noted that when the CIA first sponsored research on the program in the 1970s, the program was found to be "unpromising" and was later turned over to the Defense Department.

The Defense Intelligence Agency made the psychics available to government departments that needed information, Hyman said. At one time as many as six worked for the government.

Mansfield declined to comment on the psychics at Fort Meade or specific incidents.

Joe McMoneagle, who worked for 17 years as a psychic spy, told ABC that the psychics were instrumental in helping find missing Americans during the 1979 Iran hostage crisis.

McMoneagle, who has retired and lives in Nelson County, Va., said they described the inside and outside of the building and even the captors' uniforms.

William Green, a Customs official involved in the 1989 hunt for Charles Jordan, a one-time Customs agent wanted on drug charges, said the psychics accurately described that Jordan would be found in Wyoming near an Indian burial site.

"It was almost spooky or something," Green told ABC. "It couldn't have been much more accurate."

However, a former CIA technical director who monitored ESP programs within the intelligence community said he wasn't aware of any significant results from the psychics.

The man, identified on "Nightline" only as Norm, said the psychics offered "some interesting results, and maybe even tantalizing, but beyond that it left more questions than it answered."

He said sometimes they would have amazing perception, but on unrelated issues. "The gold nugget somehow tends to elude us," he said.

The psychics were regularly tested by the Stanford Research Institute and later Science